

SR 164 Corridor Study

Corridor Working Group Session

Meeting Summary

Meeting date: December 15, 2004

Location: Philip Starr Center – Muckleshoot Reservation (39015 172nd Avenue SE – Auburn, WA 98092)

Attendees: ***Partners in attendance:***

Dennis Dowdy, Laura Philpot, Rich Wagner – City of Auburn
Steve Taylor – Muckleshoot Tribe
Les Johnson – City of Enumclaw
Ann Martin, Mark Melroy – King County
Allison Dobbins – Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC)
Don Sims – Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Northwest Region
Seth Stark – WSDOT, Urban Planning Office

Partners not in attendance:

None

Others in attendance:

Jim Bitney, Dennis Swanson – Citizens for Safety and the Environment (CSE)
Molly Hammerton – Clear Channel/Bill Graham Presents White River Amphitheatre
Kamuron Gurol, Renee Zimmerman – WSDOT, Urban Planning Office
Ron Paananen – WSDOT, Northwest Region
Keith Sabol – Parsons Transportation Group
Kristine dos Remedios – EnviroIssues

Welcome and Goals for the Day

Seth Stark, WSDOT, welcomed the partners and thanked them for taking the time to attend the Corridor Working Group (CWG) session. Attendees introduced themselves and shared the name of the organization or jurisdiction they were representing.

Seth reviewed the session agenda and contents of the packet passed out to the group. Keith Sabol, Parsons, would review the project progress to date. Seth would give a status report on the immediate-, short- and long-term project list. A brief information sharing session about partner's jurisdictional and organizational legislative plans would be held. Partners would review and approve the Goals and Objectives document. Keith would then review the revised Evaluation Criteria piece with the partners and solicit further feedback on the criteria and metrics outlined in the document.

Report on Study Progress To Date

Keith Sabol reviewed the study progress to date. The existing conditions technical memo developed by the Transpo Group distributed at the last CWG meeting has been updated and will be posted on the website. This memo is a work in progress and as more data is available regarding the existing conditions along the corridor, this document will be updated.

Comments regarding the Goals and Objectives were received and incorporated into the document for final review and approval.

A draft existing conditions report for the environment is being prepared, which will include existing information collected from sources such as local comprehensive plans, farmland databases, and the national wetlands inventory, as well as data collected from a one-day "windshield" survey of the corridor to verify and collect additional data. All of this information will be combined with base maps provided by WSDOT to develop an initial constraints map of the corridor to then measure the impacts of different alternatives.

Finalizing the Evaluation Criteria is the next major step in the critical path of the project and will be the focus of this and the next CWG meeting.

The immediate-, short- and long-term project list was also updated based on comments received at the last CWG meeting and a map of project locations is being developed.

A meeting with partners from both the SR 164 and SR 169 Corridor Studies was held last week in order to coordinate the land use and growth assumptions to be used in the modeling efforts. Initial modeling of the corridor should be done by the first week of January.

**Status of SR
164 Immediate-,
Short-, and
Long-Term
Project List**

Seth Stark gave an update on the status of the SR 164 immediate-, short- and long-term project list. All of the comments submitted by partners during and after the last CWG meeting were incorporated into the project list. Other staff at WSDOT reviewed the revised list in order to check the accuracy of project specifications and costs. Some WSDOT staff believed that a handful of the projects on the list were priced incorrectly, as some construction or materials costs may have increased. WSDOT staff also recommended associating a price range for each project cost, rather than an absolute cost.

WSDOT staff will be in touch with individual jurisdictions regarding questions on projects in their areas. The project list will then be updated within the next few weeks.

It is important to note that this project list should only be considered a "snapshot" of projects currently on record in the partners' jurisdictions to be implemented along the corridor. Through the current SR 164 Corridor Study, some projects may be added, such as the Auburn link-road project, which is not currently listed, and some projects may be taken off of the list, if they are found to be inappropriate by the partners to the current goals for and needs along the corridor.

Partners suggested that the working nature of the list should be made more explicit on the list document so it is clear to legislators and others that projects may be added or taken off of the list.

**Jurisdictional
and
Organizational
Legislative
Plans**

Seth Stark began a discussion regarding individual jurisdictional or organizational plans for the upcoming 2005 legislative session, in order for all partners to be aware of each other's efforts.

Steve Taylor, Muckleshoot Tribe, reported that they would have lobbyists going to the legislature to petition for funding for safety projects, such as signage at I-5 and SR 167 and for deer and elk along SR 410, and for the Auburn link-road project.

Dennis Dowdy, Auburn, shared that they would be presenting the results to the mayor and city council of the Geotech study regarding the potential reopening of the old Academy Drive, in order to gain a better understanding of what the reopening project would cost before the legislative session. Auburn would also be lobbying for funding for projects 12, 13, and 14, listed as short-term on the SR 164 project list, as they apply to the stretch of road between Chinook elementary and Poplar, which has been a point of community concern due to the presence of children and the number of accidents experienced in the last few years.

Les Johnson, Enumclaw, said their jurisdiction was not planning any specific legislative efforts this year, but would be in full support of any coordinated effort to lobby for additional capacity along the corridor.

Review and Approve Goals and Objectives

Keith Sabol reviewed the revised version of the Goals and Objectives. Comments received at the last CWG meeting and shortly after had been incorporated. The last section, "defining alternatives," would be removed from the Goals and Objectives, as this topic would be covered elsewhere in the Route Development Plan (RDP).

Other comments about the document were solicited from the partners.

King County suggested that farmland preservation be mentioned in the Goals and Objectives under the environmental impacts section, in order to highlight the importance of agricultural land in the project area.

On page 4 of the document, under Public Outreach and Input, the phrase "The study area traverses the City of..." should read, "The study area traverses the Cities of..."

Also under environmental impacts, it may be important to mention tribal burial grounds, historical resources, sacred lands, or another phrase to highlight the presence of tribal lands in the project area, in order to be sensitive and proactive about identifying areas of conflict with such lands and project alternatives. WSDOT agreed with this addition. While the projects that will be proposed in the Route Development Plan will not be subject to an environmental review at this level, everything the project team and partners can do to include feasible projects will contribute to the success of this effort, including identifying potential cultural impacts.

Keith also mentioned that the Goals and Objectives would be revised to coordinate with the Evaluation Criteria, so it is clear how each criterion contributes to achieving the project goals and objectives.

The project team would make the edits to the Goals and Objectives and send the revised version to the project team for final approval.

Review Evaluation Criteria for Developing Short- and Long-term Alternatives

Keith Sabol began a discussion regarding the Evaluation Criteria to be used to develop and screen short- and long-term alternatives for the corridor. The alternatives would be screened at two points in the process – once for the fatal flaw analysis and a second time through a more detailed analysis. The short-list of projects resulting from the fatal flaw analysis will be carried forward through the second analysis and data collection phases. When projects included in the RDP move forward to the design and construction phases, a more thorough environmental review, for example, would be conducted.

The criteria and metrics included in the current version of the Evaluation Criteria were designed to be as objective and measurable as possible, in order for the group to easily defend decisions to remove or move forward with certain alternatives.

The project team asked that the partners do a more detailed edit of the document on their own, specifically looking at the metrics identified under each evaluation criterion. The discussion at the meeting focused on major points of evaluation that may have been missed completely.

Keith Sabol then talked through each of the Criteria - including Safety, Mobility, Multi-modal Demand, Ped/Bike Access, Environmental Effects, Land Use Policy and Consistency, Project Costs, and Public Support - with the partners, explaining their purpose and metrics to be used to evaluate each alternative. Partners were invited to make comments regarding the criteria at the meeting.

Safety – In relation to school busses, the plan should also address how to keep cars moving around stopped busses, while making sure to get the busses back into the flow of traffic in a timely manner. This should potentially be characterized as a mobility problem.

Mobility – Access to the plateau should be specifically mentioned and the plan should also address this issue. Access management, including ways to limit access to improve mobility and safety at the corridor, without sacrificing cross-traffic movement, should be addressed. Mobility should also accommodate moving agricultural products from farmlands on the plateau or elsewhere along the corridor.

Multi-modal Demand – Other kinds of recreational/event trips along the corridor are significant. Partners suggested that the study look at creative multi-modal strategies that are operational and not just physical in nature to deal with this kind of traffic.

Ped-Bike Access – Equestrian traffic should also be added to this category, similar to the SR 169 Corridor Study.

Environmental Effects – This criterion will be key to the fatal flaw analysis. In regards to salmon and fish bearing streams, crossings should not be the only metric; intrusion into buffers or even runoff into streams should be included.

Land Use Policy and Consistency – No comments were made.

Project Costs – Partners suggested that the project team find a way of comparing projects in a relative sense, meaning all project costs should be compared for the same year, in order for the project costs to be directly comparable. Projects should also be compared using some sort of inflation multiplier so the true costs for the construction year are calculated.

Public Support – Partners agreed that tribal representatives should be specifically included along with elected officials. Even though tribal representatives are elected officials within the tribe, they are often not thought of when the phrase “elected officials” is used.

The project team agreed to make corrections and additions to the Evaluation Criteria per comments offered by the partners. Partners also have until December 21st to offer additional comments on the document.

The project team solicited comments from the members of the public who were in

attendance at the meeting. Dennis Swanson from Citizens for Safety and the Environment (CSE) offered a few points of consideration for the partners. Funding for many of these projects will depend on whether or not there is controversy surrounding a project, as legislators often avoid funding such projects. CSE and other coalitions who work to protect agricultural and farmland will be opposed to any project if it intrudes onto rural farmland. If projects can be built without doing this, they will have no reason to raise controversy. Consensus around a project should be another criterion or metric under public support for the evaluation criteria, because with a wide range of support from the tribes, state, county, local jurisdictions or public organizations, a project is more likely to move forward.

Next Steps

The next CWG meeting will be held the week of January 17th. At that meeting, partners will finalize the Evaluation Criteria.

Action Items:

- Partners are to send their availability for the next CWG meeting to Seth Stark at WSDOT (starks@wsdot.wa.gov) and Kristine dos Remedios at EnviroIssues (kdosremedios@enviroissues.com) by December 17th.
- Partners will also notify Kristine of any conflicts with Open Houses during the first two weeks of March along the corridor.
- WSDOT and the project team will be in contact with individual jurisdictions regarding questions in relation to the SR 164 project list.
- WSDOT will send the revised Goals and Objectives for final review and approval.
- WSDOT will send the Evaluation Criteria distributed at the December 15th CWG meeting to the partners electronically for their review and comment by December 21st.
- WSDOT will develop a RDP Table of Contents for distribution to the partners.
- WSDOT will develop a graphic to explain how the RDP process works, including major steps and points of CWG partner input.
- WSDOT will further clarify the definition of "alternative" for the purposes of the project.
- WSDOT will meet with other WSDOT staff to understand past RDP implementation issues in order to make the SR 164 as successful as possible.
- WSDOT will develop a problem statement for the corridor to clearly explain what is happening along the corridor today and what is anticipated for the future.
- WSDOT will be in touch with CWG partners to get onto City and Agency Council agendas during January and February.
- WSDOT will update the Corridor Study schedule.
- EnviroIssues will write a meeting summary for the Chartering Session and send it to the partners for review.

Upcoming Meetings

- CWG Meeting: The week of February 7th

Handouts

- CWG Session Agenda
- November 16th SR 164 CWG Meeting Summary
- SR 164 Revised Goals and Objectives
- SR 164 Draft Evaluation Criteria
- SR 164 Project "One-Sheet"
- SR 164 Vicinity Map